



DELAWARE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Breaking the cycle of violence.

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Senator David B. McBride, President Pro Tempore & Committee Chair
The Honorable Senator Nicole Poore, Committee Co-Chair
The Honorable Senator Harris B. McDowell
The Honorable Senator Bryan Townsend
The Honorable Senator Catherine Cloutier
The Honorable Senator Gerald W. Hocker

From: Mariann Kenville-Moore, LCSW, DVS
Director of Advocacy & Policy

Date: January 16, 2019

RE: HB 1, An Act to Amend DE's Constitution Relative to Equal Rights

The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence commends the sponsors of HB 1 and the members of the 149th General Assembly for their efforts to ensure the passage of Delaware's Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. We are also grateful to the civic-minded people of our state who have organized and advocated for equality. The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence joins that chorus and supports HB 1; and also recognizes the historic significance of this important public policy.

Over the past few years, we have heard the arguments that such legislation is unnecessary, or worse, that it threatens the stability of our families, schools, and workplaces. Nothing could be further from the truth. For decades, organizations like the World Bank, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations have advocated for the passage of public policies promoting gender equality because gender equality is an essential factor in any community's, state's or country's security and stability.

Gender equality is not only about doing what is right or about social justice; it is also an important element in economic development, and a critical predictor of stability and security. Communities where gender equality is the norm exhibit greater economic stability, lower rates of violence, and have better satisfaction and health outcomes than communities where there is greater disparity. Additionally, in the field of domestic violence, research and study have clearly documented the links between historical structures of oppression and discrimination to violence. The fact is that violence in intimate relationships is often rooted in the simple belief that women are not equal to men, and that violence, coercion and control are acceptable methods to maintain supremacy. It is imperative that Delaware have clearly stated values enumerated in our state Constitution to counter antiquated and harmful belief systems.

It is our belief that the passage of Delaware's Equal Rights Amendment will help advance the equal treatment of all people and further the cause to end violence in every relationship. We urge the Committee and Senate to support the passage of HB1.